



To: School Superintendents, Principals, Charter School Directors, and Alternative Education Program Staff

From: Kimb Stewart, Alternative Education Specialist

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Subject: Alternative Education Eligibility

Indiana Code 20-30-8-10 lists five criteria for students to be eligible to enroll in an Alternative Education program. The first of those criteria is that “the student intends to withdraw or has withdrawn from school before graduation.” Traditionally, the interpretation of this statute has been limited to students who intend to drop out of school. After reviewing that interpretation in context with the definitions of dropouts and withdrawing students, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) has determined the definition of “intends to withdraw or has withdrawn prior to graduation” includes students who intend to withdraw from school for any reason, including transferring to another school, whether accredited or non-accredited, public or private. This includes students who intend to withdraw to homeschool.

When considering whether this interpretation will benefit your school corporation, charter school, or alternative education program, please keep in mind that there have been no changes to any other program requirements or guidelines. Alternative education programs must, among other requirements, serve students in grades 6-12, not exceed a 15:1 student to teacher ratio, have an Individual Service Plan (ISP) for each student, and instruct eligible students in a different manner than the manner of instruction available in the traditional school setting.

If your school corporation or charter school already has an alternative education program and you are considering using this interpretation of student withdrawal in your programming, you should consider whether the students who might meet this new interpretation will be an appropriate addition to current programming. For example, if the current alternative education is an alternative to suspension or expulsion program, would students who have withdrawn or intend to withdraw have the appropriate supports in your current program? School corporations and charter schools are not limited in the number of programs they may offer. School corporations and charter schools may also create an area alternative education program under IC 20-26-10.

If you have questions about alternative education programs or this memo, please contact Kimb Stewart at kstewart@doe.in.gov.